Effect of Convergence Bill on Journalists

3885. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposed Convergence Bill is likely to affect journalists both accredited and non-accredited; and

(b) whether Government have received any memorandum or other response from journalistic bodies over this issue ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) In pursuance of the New Telecom Policy-99, it is proposed to prepare a new comprehensive statute to replace the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 keeping in view the rapid convergence of telecom, computers, television and electronics. The matter formed a specific term of reference of the Group on Telecom and IT Convergence set up under the chairmanship of Finance Minister. The Group has now submitted its Report along with the suggested legislation which is presently under consideration of the Government.

(b) No, Sir.

TAC in Kerala

3886. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Telephone Advisory Committees in Kerala; and

(b) the names of the members of each TAC and the category under which each of them are nominated ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) There are twelve Telephone Advisory Committees in Kerala.

(b) The detailed information is at Annexure *(See* Appendix 193, Annexure No. 21).

Concessional Tariff Rates on STD/ISD Calling Cards in Bangalore

3887. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Bangalore Telephones has introduced STD/ISD calling cards in Bangalore;

(b) if so, whether concessional tariff rates of telephone Department on STD/ISD calling cards are provided;

(c) if so, whether Government are aware that on Sundays and Holidays when the services are provided at discounted low rates, 'Busy' recorded message is played; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to ensure that sufficient technical infrastructure should be created to manage the services during the period when the charges are lower than normal tariff rates ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) No such message is played, as the junctions are dimensioned on the basis of expected peak traffic.

Commemorative Stamp in the name of Shri P.S. Varier

3888. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for the release of a commemorative stamp in the name of Shri P.S. Varier, the founder of Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala is pending before Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when, the commemorative stamp will be released since 2002 is the centenary year of the foundation of this world famous Ayurvedic Institution ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A proposal has been received for release of a commemorative postage stamp on Shri P.S. Varier during the centenary celebrations of Kottakkal Arya Vaidya **Sala** in 2002.

(c) The proposal is being placed before the Philatelic Advisory Committee for consideration.

Complete Erosion of Government Equity

3889. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN:

SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that around 87 public sector undertakings havt accumulated a loss of about Rs. 37,970 crores and this has resulted in complete erosion of Government equity;